



Mammal Research in Europe: 4th European Congress of Mammalogy

Recognising no mean importance of animals in the forest ecosystems and surroundings as well as the substantial links between the Mammalogy and forest

sciences, knowledge of the new events in wildlife studies goes more relevant.

Mammalogy deals with animals belonging to the class *Mammalia*. Mammals are the inherent part of a forest biota; furthermore, that is one of the main renewable natural resource. Mammals distinguish from the other vertebrates by the fact that females nourish their young with milk secreted by their mammary glands. We know about 4600 species of living mammals. The larger animals, such as carnivores and ungulates, are well known while many other species go mainly slightly known. Mammalogists are engaged in the systematics, anatomy, physiology, ecology or behaviour of a certain taxonomic group or assemblage of mammals.

It became the tradition of European mammalogists to meet together representing their research results and achievements. The last meeting 4th Congress of Mammalogy follows the previous Congress in Jyväskylä, Finland, and has been held in Brno, Czech Republic, on July 27 – August 1, 2003. The organizers of the Congress were the Institute of Vertebrate Biology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Faculty of Science of the Masaryk University and *Societas Europaea Mammalogica*. The significant input of the International Scientific Committee (22 members from different countries, the chairman Nils Chr. Stenseth) and Local Organising Committee (38 members, the co-chairmen Jan Zima and Jiří Gaisler) enabled representatives from different countries to take an active part in the Scientific Programme, to impart benefits of their knowledge, and extend and make new useful scientific contacts.

The European Congress of Mammalogy was held at the Masaryk University in Brno.

The Congress has focused on a wide area of research of Holarctic mammals as well as invited the relevant contributions from other zoogeographical regions. Thus, near 394 official representatives not only



The main building of the 4th European Congress of Mammalogy, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, July 27 – August 1, 2003

from the European countries but also from Canada, USA, South America (Colombia, Argentina), Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia), Asia (Japan, Taiwan, Israel, Iran, Turkey), and Australia came to the Congress. The Congress based upon submitted contributions offered by registered participants and included opening and closing ceremonies, plenary and parallel sessions, symposia, poster sessions, and exhibitions. All participants were in a position to choose interested them symposia and general sessions among 12 Symposia and 4 General Sessions as well as 5 Plenary Lectures. Simultaneously, they took part in the Poster Session, which topics have corresponded to the certain topics of General Sessions and Symposia. Plenary lectures were given by Luděk Bartoš (Czech Republic, *Fluctuating asymmetry of antlers – its significance in dominance and mate selection*), Bogumiła Jędrzejewska (Poland, *Biogeographic approach to carnivore ecology: a new look at species adaptation*), Xavier Lambin (UK, *The influence of dispersal on small mammal population dynamics*), Jeremy B. Searle (UK, *Chromosomes and genes in the common shrew: a Pan-European study*), and Nils Chr. Stenseth (Norway, *The hare-lynx cycle as seen through the*

'eyes' of the Canadian lynx: a review of more than a century's research). The General Sessions focused on the Population Ecology (22 oral presentations and 39 posters), Behavioural Ecology (29 oral presentations and 50 posters), Biogeography (4 oral presentations and 9 posters), Evolution, Phylogeny, and Genetics of mammals (16 oral presentations and 27 posters). The participants also actively took their share in various Symposia such as Phylogeography of European mammals, Mapping of distribution of mammals in Europe, Interspecific competition among native and introduced ungulates, Progress with mammal action plans in Europe, Conservation biology of Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), Analyses of mammalian time series data: appreciating the oscillatory nature, Mammalian reproduction and life histories, etc. A symposium programme generally consisted of invited and contributed papers, and general discussion.

Participants of the congress had possibilities not only to deepen their knowledge and give benefits of their experience to colleagues but also to know more about the location of Congress. Brno is one of the largest cities and regional centre of the southern part of Moravia in the Czech Republic. This region was and is still attractive because of the favourable location and a lot of the historic sights and a beauty of the landscape. Brno has a deep historical heritage as far as the 13th century. It is also famous for the well-known geneticist Gregor Mendel. There are many impressive historical buildings including interesting buildings of the functionalism and architectural monuments. Brno is rich and famous centre of the international trade fairs and expositions. It is famous city for universities and research institutes of different branches of knowledge. A lot of historical monuments and picturesque landscape are meeting one's eye in the environs of Brno. Some of these places of Moravia were included into the programme of Congress Excursions, such as the Austerlitz battlefield (it is mentioning the battle of the Three Emperors and the victory of the Em-

peror Napoleon Bonoparte), Lednice castle (it originally was the Gothic fortress in 1222, modified and expanded into a Renaissance chateau, further in Baroque and since 1846-1858 took a shape of a Tudor Gothic with the impressive greenhouse, Baroque Garden and the large English Park; there is an important bird reserve), and The Moravian Karst (an impressive landscape on the area north of Brno, a large complex of ramified active caves, which are flown and formed by the river).



The Lednice Castle near Brno, the Czech Republic

All excursions passed through typical ecosystems of the Southern Moravia. Mammalogists had a possibility to observe habitats characteristic of certain mammal species, such as *Capreolus capreolus*, *Castor fiber*, *Lepus europaeus*, *Mustela eversmanni*, *Erinaceus concolor*, *Neomys anomalus*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *Apodemus microps*, etc.

The participants of the Congress of Mammalogy appreciated the value of regular meetings, growing importance of the continuous research of mammals inseparably from their habitats, positively noted the crescent potential of mammalogists. The further meeting is supposed to be held in Italy in 2007.

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